



October 2002

NOTICE TO POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS OF FROZEN COOKED PORK PRODUCTS TO THE USDA

In the near future, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will issue Announcement LS-93, titled "Purchase of Frozen, Cooked Pork Products for distribution to Child Nutrition and Other Federal Food and Nutrition Programs" that will set forth the contractual and specification requirements for the purchase of domestically produced frozen, cooked pork products. The cooked pork items must be produced from hogs slaughtered **after September 9, 2002**.

The cooked pork products will only be purchased from suppliers who are deemed eligible by AMS. To become an eligible supplier, an offeror must submit a Technical Proposal and sample product and successfully complete a pre-award assessment audit. Offeror(s) interested in becoming an eligible supplier are required to submit the following for evaluation and approval:

Product Sample:

- (1) Two (2)- four (4) pound samples of applicable cooked pork products, including the ingredients statement and Nutrition Facts Panel that conforms to the attached Item Description and Checklist of Requirements, dated September 2002. (All samples must arrive--in the frozen state--zero degrees or less).

Technical Proposal:

- (1) Include a detailed description of each item offered and each of the production steps that are taken to meet or exceed the minimum product requirements set forth in the Item Description and Checklist of Requirements for Cooked Pork Products, dated September 2002.
- (2) Describe all the quality assurance methods used to verify conformance to all requirements. This will include the monitoring and measurements taken during the process to verify conformance with each requirement. All results shall be recorded and made available to AMS.
- (3) Identify all corrective actions to be taken if deviations from contractual and specification requirements occur during production, and all preventative actions to be taken to preclude a reoccurrence.

To assist in your documentation preparation, we recommend following these four steps:

- (1) **Plan**--how does the company plan on meeting the requirements; (2) **Do**--what are the steps in your process to meet the requirements; (3) **Check**--what are the company's quality assurance procedures to assure compliance with contractual requirements; and (4) **Act** -- what are the company's corrective and preventative measures taken if a problem occurs.

-More-

Notice to Trade

Page 2

To become an eligible supplier and be qualified to bid on the first Invitation, the Technical Proposal and product sample(s) listed above must be submitted prior to **October 31, 2002**. This will allow sufficient time to evaluate the product, the Technical Proposal materials and conduct the required pre-award supplier assessment audit.

Please forward the complete Technical Proposal package and samples of cooked pork products and documentation to the attention of: Contracting Officer; Livestock and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture: 2610- South Building: 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250. It is strongly recommended that the required materials and samples be forwarded by express or courier service to ensure timely delivery.

After the Technical Proposal(s) and sample(s) are evaluated and approved, an AMS audit team will perform an in-plant assessment of the facilities, processes, and quality control program used to produce the frozen, cooked pork products to determine the supplier's ability to meet contractual requirements. The audit will include an evaluation of the potential contractor's and subcontractor's facilities, equipment, procedures, and the appropriate documents and forms used during the production of the cooked pork products. Documentation must support the production of the product that complies with the Item Description and Checklist of Requirements dated September 2002.

In addition, the audit will consist of the review of purchasing, receiving, production, quality control, inventory and shipping records, and interviews with management and production personnel.

The results of the AMS evaluation of the product sample(s), and Technical Proposal(s) and notification to the supplier will take approximately ten (10) working days. Suppliers with approved samples and Technical Proposals should contact Jim Riva, (Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch) on (202) 720-1124 to setup a pre-award assessment audit.

If further information is needed or questions arise related to contractual or specification requirements, please contact Monica Alexander of the Commodity Procurement Branch on (202) 720-2650.

/s/ William T. Sessions (10/02/02)

William T. Sessions
Associate Deputy Administrator
Livestock and Seed Program

Attachments

ITEM DESCRIPTION AND CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS FOR COOKED PORK PRODUCTS -- SEPTEMBER 2002

I. ITEM DESCRIPTION

Items -	<p><u>Pork Sloppy Joe Mix, Fully Cooked</u> – this item consists of ground pork with appropriate flavoring ingredients for use as a sandwich filling.</p> <p><u>Pork Taco Filling, Fully Cooked</u> – this item consists of ground pork with appropriate flavoring ingredients for use as a taco filling.</p> <p><u>Breaded Pork Patties, Fully Cooked</u> – this item consists of ground pork that is formed into round or oval patties, breaded, and fully cooked.</p>
Meat Ingredient -	Within the items listed above, pork shall be the only meat ingredient and shall be at least 75% of the raw formula.
Non-meat Ingredients -	Batter/breading, seasonings, spices, and other applicable ingredients shall not exceed 25 percent.

II. CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS

Cooked pork product must be produced in accordance with Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulations and this checklist of requirements.

A. MATERIALS

Contractors are responsible for providing sufficient product traceability and must have records to verify the source of raw materials used in each lot of product.

1. PORK

- Pork must originate from U.S. produced livestock. The origin of the pork will be verified in accordance with ARC Branch Instructions for Domestic Origin Verification.
- Pork must originate from facilities with an operating policy that addresses the handling of non-ambulatory hogs or “downer” hogs (hogs that are unable to walk under their own power) in accordance with FSIS Directive 6900.1R1 – Humane Handling of Disabled Livestock, issued 11/02/98. In addition, the carcasses of such “downer” animals must be segregated and the product from them cannot be included in USDA purchased cooked pork product.
- Raw material must originate from hogs slaughtered after September 9, 2002.
- Contractors must declare the source of the raw pork material (e.g., picnics, trimmings, etc.).
- Pork that is mechanically separated from bone with automatic deboning systems or advanced meat (lean) recovery (AMR) systems is not allowed.
- The product shall be free of bone and cartilage.

- Non-meat components such as spinal cord, organ tissue, and foreign material are not allowed.

2. NON-MEAT INGREDIENTS

Significant ingredients (more than 1 percent) shall be derived from U.S. produced products.

Seasonings and other ingredients will be used to produce products with mild flavor profiles suitable for institutional feeding systems.

For breaded pork patties, the batter/breading shall be similar to that normally used to produce commercially marketed cooked pork items with the desired flavor, texture, and color. Enriched flour of domestic origin, must be the primary ingredient, by weight, in the batter/breading combination.

Monosodium glutamate is not allowed.

3. SHAPE

Breaded pork patties shall be round or oval.

4. SERVING SIZE

The serving size shall be declared in the offeror's technical proposal and targeted to meet the 2.0 ounces meat/meat alternate "as served" requirement for Child Nutrition Programs.

5. PRODUCT COOKING

All product shall be fully cooked in accordance with FSIS regulations.

6. PRODUCT TEMPERATURE

All products shall be frozen and shall not exceed 0°F at the time of shipment and delivery. Breaded pork patties shall be individually quick frozen (IQF).

7. COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

Cooking instructions for the end-user shall be provided in the offeror's technical proposal. The breaded pork patties shall be prepared so that the end-user may bake them in a conventional or convection type oven.

8. FINISHED PRODUCT FAT AND SODIUM LIMITATIONS

The fat content shall not exceed 16 g per 100 g of cooked product. The sodium content shall not exceed 700 mg per 100 g of cooked product. The declared fat and sodium contents shall be stated on the nutrition facts panel on each package label in accordance with FSIS nutritional labeling regulations.

9. METAL DETECTION

All product shall be free of metal contaminants. The offeror shall demonstrate to the AMS agent that the metal detection equipment used is capable of detecting stainless steel, ferrous and non-ferrous metals.

10. MICROBIAL REQUIREMENTS

The offeror's technical proposal must document how they comply with FSIS *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes* requirements for ready-to-eat foods.

B. PREPARATION FOR DELIVERY

1. PACKAGING AND PACKING

All product will be vacuum packaged or packed in a sealed (tamper proof) package. For schools, four (4) 10-pound, five (5) 8-pound, or eight (8) 5-pound primary containers (packages) shall be packed in a 40-pound (net weight) shipping container. For other Federal Food Programs (households), ten (10) 4-pound primary containers (packages) shall be packed in a 40-pound (net weight) shipping container. Only one size and style of primary (bags) and shipping containers may be offered in an individual shipping unit. The shipping containers shall be in compliance with the National Motor Freight Classification, or the Uniform Freight Classification, as applicable.

2. LABELING

Both primary and shipping containers will be labeled to include all information required by FSIS regulations and shall have a printed code that is traceable to the production lot and date. Nutrition Facts labeling, based on actual nutritional analysis of the product, is required on both primary and shipping containers. Primary containers shall have a “best-if-used-by” date.

Shipping containers shall contain the following information:

- USDA Shield (at least 2 inches high and appearing on the top of the container or on the principle display panel).



- Contract Number.
- Product Code (the appropriate product codes listed in the table below).

Product Codes		
Items	Schools	Households
Pork Sloppy Joe Mix, Fully Cooked	A691	A688
Pork Taco Filling, Fully Cooked	A680	A690
Breaded Pork Patties, Fully Cooked	A692	A689

All labeling shall be illustrated in the offeror's technical proposal.

3. PALLETIZED UNIT LOADS

Unless otherwise specified in the invitation, all truck, rail, and piggyback shipments of product shall be unitized by stacking the shipping containers on new or well-maintained pallets. The shipping containers shall be held firmly in place by applying plastic stretch-wrap as tightly as possible around all of the tiers stacked on the pallet.

Pallets shall be flush, 48 inches long by 40 inches wide, stringer or block design, partial or full four-way entry, nonreversible, and suitable for use in the shipment of approximately 2,000 pounds of food product.

Pallet loads shall be stacked in a manner that minimizes the overhang of the shipping containers over the edges of the pallets and exposes the principle shipping container display panel of all boxes to facilitate certification examinations.

4. TRACEABILITY AND SHIPMENT

All primary and shipping containers shall have a printed code that is traceable to production lot and date. All products must be delivered to AMS destinations under seal.

C. WARRANTY AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

A warranty, a "best-if-used-by" date, and a customer service clause that includes customer complaint resolution procedures shall be included in the technical proposal. These procedures will be used to resolve product complaints from recipient agencies or AMS.